
FAMILY MEMORIES

FIRST EDITION, JANUARY 2023



EDWIN F. TAYLOR
with E. Andrew Taylor

COVER PHOTO: Taylor-Deery Families
Summer 1958, Longview, Washington

Left to Right:

- Edwin F. Taylor [with mustache]
Born 22 June 1931, Oberlin, Ohio
- Helen Thompson Taylor
Born Helen Ruth Thompson
19 April 1933, Syracuse, New York
Died 14 September 2018, Oberlin, Ohio
- Lloyd William Taylor II
Born 3 May 1958, New Haven, Connecticut
- Esther Bliss Taylor
Born Esther Elinora Bliss
25 October 1890, Windom, Kansas
Died 27 November 1980, Oberlin, Ohio
- Susan Jean Deery
Born 9 May 1947, Longview, Washington
Died 10 August 1971
Yukon, Canada
- Linda Deery Nelson
Born Linda Joan Deery
8 October 1948, Longview, Washington
- Ruth Taylor Deery
Born Ruth Mildred Taylor
23 April 1923, Chicago, Illinois
Died 3 March 2008, Portland, Oregon
- Edwin ("Ned") Lloyd Deery
Born 26 July 1954, Longview, Washington
Died 4 Feb 2020, Longview, Washington
- Harold Aubrey Deery
Born 26 August 1917, Seattle, Washington
Died 24 October 2003, Longview, Washington
- Kevin Jon Deery
Born 15 July 1956, Longview, Washington



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Baby's Family Tree

Father's Side

Mother's Side

Father's Name Lloyd W. Taylor

Mother's Name Esther Bliss Taylor

Place of Birth Pittsfield, Maine

Place of Birth Winston, Kansas

Date of Birth January 4, 1893

Date of Birth October 25, 1890

Grandfather's Name Levi W. Taylor

Grandfather's Name Edwin Clarence Bliss

Place of Birth Jay, Maine

Place of Birth Gunnell, Iowa

Date of Birth Sept. 9, 1858

Date of Birth August 17, 1859

Grandmother's Name Carrie B. Taylor

Grandmother's Name Jessie Winslow ^{Bliss} Meeker

Place of Birth West Freeman, Me.

Place of Birth Manteno, Illinois

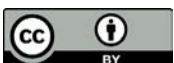
Date of Birth Feb. 18, 1866

Date of Birth April 11, 1864

From Edwin F.
Taylor's baby
book.

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Lloyd and Esther	3
The Observer.....	17
Ruth and Harold.....	19
Helen.....	27
Father's Death.....	29
Our 1936 Cadillac	31



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INTRODUCTION

CAPTURING MEMORIES

My children asked me to write down memories of my childhood and youth. No one else alive shared these experiences or heard stories about the early lives of my parents or my sister.

This memoir draws from several sources of information in addition to my own memory:

1. Lineage of Edwin Floriman¹⁰ Taylor by Lloyd William⁹ Taylor. One of my father's hobbies was genealogy. The superscript 10 after Floriman refers to the fact that I am the tenth generation in the United States. Father is, of course, the ninth. When Ruth married Harold in 1944, Father assembled her genealogy as a wedding present. His father Levi William Taylor did the lettering. They made two copies and set aside the second copy for me, even though my wedding took place seven years after Father's death.
2. Letters from Panama written by both Lloyd and Esther to their parents and in-laws. These were passed down by my sister Ruth to her daughter Linda Nelson.
3. Carrie Brown Taylor (1866 – 1942), a pamphlet produced at the death of Lloyd's mother, also passed down to Linda.
4. Stories my mother told me over the years about her earlier life and that of my father. This is the most uncertain source, because it is what she remembered years after the events and what I remember about her memories 42 years after her death.

Edwin F. Taylor
January 2023

LLOYD & ESTHER

PITTSFIELD, WINDOM, PANAMA, AND BEYOND

Bleeding Kansas

My mother's mother, Jessie Winslow Meeteer, was born on April 11, 1864, in what was still called "bleeding Kansas" because of the pre-civil-war fighting between those who wanted Kansas to enter the union as a slave state and those who wanted it to be a free state.

Esther's Childhood

Esther spent her childhood in Grinnell, Iowa, where her doctor father had a downtown medical office. He also made house calls, which required two phones, because at that time Grinnell had two competing telephone companies. This was before popular ownership of automobiles, so house calls required a buggy and horse stabled behind the house.

Originally there was no electricity at home. Kerosene provided lighting and cooking, while fireplaces provided drafty space heating. Refrigeration of sorts consisted of a horizontal shelf lowered by rope to just above the water in the cool well from which water for drinking and washing was also pumped by hand.

The family was completed one-and-one-half years later with the arrival of Esther's brother Edwin Meeteer Bliss, whose first name was that of his father, and which my mother later gave to me.

"We should have 'Read Him Through'"

As Edwin Bliss matured, it became clear that he had "weak eyes." The exact meaning of this ancient phrase is no longer clear to me. In practice at the time, it meant that he could not do the wholesale reading required to graduate from Grinnell College, as Lloyd and Esther did. Since he was not in school, Edwin was drafted into the army during the first World War. I heard no reports that he participated in fighting. After the war he went west, as many young men did, settled in Casper, Wyoming, married a woman named Lillian, and enjoyed reading in spite of his "weak eyes." He also enjoyed playing the banjo.

Many years later, when she lived with us in Oberlin, I heard Grandma Bliss say repeatedly, "We should have 'read him through,'" meaning

Lloyd William Taylor, born January 4, 1893 Pittsfield, Maine; Bachelor of Science, Grinnell College 1914; married Esther Elenora Bliss December 11, 1917; First Lieutenant, Coastal Artillery Corps 1917-1919, posted in Panama; Ph.D. University of Chicago 1922; Professor and Chairman, Department of Physics Oberlin College 1924-1948; children: Ruth Mildred Taylor (later Ruth Taylor Deery), born April 23, 1923 and Edwin Floriman Taylor, born June 22, 1931. Lloyd Taylor died August 8, 1948 in an accident on Mount St. Helens in Washington State.

Esther Bliss Taylor, born Esther Elenora Bliss on October 25, 1890 in Windom, Kansas. She was a "honey-moon baby" born nine months plus ten days after the marriage on January 15, 1890 of her parents, Dr. Edwin

Clarence Bliss and Jessie Winslow Meeteer. Esther died November 27, 1980, at a nursing home in Oberlin, Ohio.



Esther Bliss Taylor and Lloyd William Taylor, 1918

that family members should have read his college assignments to him out loud so that he could have qualified for the kinds of professional jobs available to college graduates.

Once Uncle Edwin came to visit us in Oberlin. He wrote ahead to his sister Esther, "During my visit I hope you will not invite your friends to meet me. If absolutely necessary, I can be friendly – but not very."

The Observer

When Edwin Meeteer Bliss was buried in the family plot in Grinnell, Iowa, my sister Ruth and I wrote a memorial statement we read over the grave. The statement is available in the chapter, "The Observer," in this document.

"During my visit I
hope you will not
invite your friends
to meet me. If
absolutely necessary,
I can be friendly –
but not very."
Uncle Edwin

"God does not want..."

It is hard for us to envision how powerful the missionary urge was among the dominant Protestant churches in late 1800's and early 1900's. It was the subject of books, magazines, and especially church sermons and youth meetings. One time Grandma Bliss found her daughter Esther weeping bitterly. When asked why, Esther replied, "I don't want to be a

missionary to China." Grandma Bliss comforted her: "God does not want you to have a vocation you hate. I'm sure you can find other ways to serve Him." This story is a preview of my wife Helen's Northern Baptist family tradition and my winning a Danforth fellowship that paid all expenses to Harvard (and Boston University for Helen) in my preparation for university teaching "as a Christian vocation."

The Farm

Father's mother, Carrie Elnora Brown, was born in 1866. When she was nine her father remarried and Carrie went to live with a childless couple, Washington and Reliance Daggett, on their farm near Strong, Maine. Years later our family spent a summer vacation on that farm, one of the happiest interludes in my young life.

The front yard of the farm overlooked a deep valley with mountains on the other side. We could stand in front of the farm house and shout a full sentence which echoed back in its entirety.

The family farm house itself was the first of a string of buildings, connected to one another so that the family could move from one to the next without going outdoors into the fierce Maine winter. Next to the farm house came the carriage house, then the stable, then the barn, followed by others whose purposes I have forgotten. Every Saturday the family baked 21 apple pies in the wood-burning stove, one pie for each meal of the coming week.

Down a hill behind the buildings lay a bubbling creek where I spent happy hours alone, many of them building a dam to hold back the clear water. I soon learned that every possible arrangement of rocks stops the flow only temporarily. One time I ran up the hill and exclaimed to my mother in the kitchen, "I am having the best time I ever had in my whole life!" She greeted the news with happy excitement, but when I returned to the stream it was no longer quite so much fun.

Ownership of the Maine farm passed down in the family for decades, getting more complicated with the expanded number in each generation. I received a letter from a female relative who was attempting, bless her heart, to clear the title so the farm could be sold. The process required a signed release from every living descendent. Naturally, one male relative refused to sign away his rights – for sentimental or financial reasons – so the delay continued. Finally, a check for \$300 arrived – my share of the legacy – which was enough to buy a bed. I felt comfortable in that bed, as if I were sleeping again on Grandmother Taylor's farm.

When Helen Ruth Thompson and I were first engaged at Oberlin College, I made a long, wonky list of activities that we should share as a way to grow closer. The third item on the list recalled "the best time I ever had in my whole life" when I was a little boy vacationing on Grandmother Taylor's farm:

read a book
climb a mountain
dam a creek

Floriman

I have never liked my middle name, Floriman. It has no lilt, no poetry, no reference to the Bible or history or great literature. I changed my mind when Mother told me the family story how my middle name came to bind two generations together.

On July 7, 1885, Carrie Elnora Brown married her former teacher Levi William Taylor. Their first two children were boys who died because they could not get enough breast milk and were unable to digest the baby milk supplements then available:

Floriman Earl, born in 1886, died in 1887.
Merle Vinton, born and died in 1891.

My father Lloyd William Taylor, born in 1893, was headed for the same fate as his dead brothers when the family doctor brought to his parents a can of Carnation Condensed Milk which had recently come on the market. "Why don't you try this?" he suggested. Lloyd William Taylor survived and lived to be my father. I myself love the rich taste of Carnation Condensed Milk and recall that my unpoetic middle name carries an unspoken message of sympathy and love between my father and his parents.

Grinnell, Iowa

As soon as Lloyd was ready for college, his father Levi moved the family to Grinnell, Iowa, where Levi secured a position as an accountant with the Grinnell Washing Machine Company while his son Lloyd attended Grinnell College.

The Titanic

Mother recalled the morning in 1912 when the report of the Titanic sinking appeared in the local papers. When she entered history class, the teacher had a newspaper spread out on the desk in front of him. He spoke to the class about the British crew of the Titanic who insisted that women and children had priority in the lifeboats before men or the crew. He contrasted this behavior with that of a crew of a ship sinking in the Mediterranean Sea: That crew tossed the passengers out of the lifeboats and took their places themselves.

The historically earliest recording reproduced in my discs of music is a performance of "The Lost Chord" by Enrico Caruso at a New York City benefit performance for survivors of the Titanic.

University of Chicago

After he graduated from Grinnell College in 1914 and before he joined the US Army in 1918, Lloyd Taylor started graduate school in physics at the University of Chicago. Before he applied, Lloyd said to the chairman of the department, "I am a schoolmarm [that is, interested in physics teaching, not research]. Will you accept me on that basis?" The Chairman said, "Yes." Teaching and textbook writing were



Father's professional interests and have been mine as well.

Childhood farm of Carrie Elnora Brown, Strong, Maine

Discussing Politics

After Esther graduated from Grinnell College in 1916, she taught high school in Marshalltown, Iowa, 310 miles west of Chicago. Sometimes Lloyd visited her on weekends. Someone asked her landlady if she worried that the couple would wear out her couch. "Not at all," she replied, "They sit on opposite sides of the room and discuss politics."

All That Cash

It must have been when Esther was in a larger rooming house or hotel that Lloyd arrived to visit with his pockets stuffed with cash. Esther asked why he was carrying so much cash. Turns out that a male employee of the institution had asked Esther if he could visit her

in her room. She replied, "Certainly not!" and reported the incident to Lloyd, who arrived expecting to punch out the miscreant. Lloyd carried cash for his bail. Luckily the male employee was not around during that visit.

Panama Cannons

The canal across the isthmus of Panama, which shortened by thousands of miles the ocean trip between the eastern and western coasts of the United States, was completed in 1914. It is 13,000 miles from New York City to San Francisco by sea around Cape Horn, the southernmost point of South America, but only 5,000 miles by way of the Panama Canal. The United States entered the First World War in 1918. This made the brand-new Panama Canal a crucial military installation. Each end of the Canal was guarded by 12-, 14-, and 16-inch cannons. (A 16-inch cannon is one whose shells are 16 inches in diameter.) They were the nuclear weapons of their day. Lloyd Taylor joined the army as a First Lieutenant in the Coastal Artillery Corps and was assigned to Panama. His specialty was "exterior ballistics," the trajectory of each immense shell after it left the cannon's barrel.

A sixteen-inch gun was 60 feet long, the projectile weighed 1 ¼ tons, used 675 pounds of powder. It cost \$2500 to fire one shell [\$74,000 in 2022 dollars]. During the visit of a general, they received permission to fire three shells at a towed target ten miles offshore. This target was a float 20 feet on a side with a 15-foot wooden pyramid on it towed with a rope by a distant ship. Father proudly reported that they hit the target on the first try.

Sixteen-inch artillery, Fort Amador, Panama, 1919.



Sentry Duty

Among Lloyd's duties was to go at night from sentry post to sentry post. If a sentry falls asleep during peacetime, he is given a dishonorable discharge. If the sentry falls asleep during wartime, he is shot.

Once when Father opened the door to a sentry post, he found the sentry fast asleep with his head on the table. Father quietly left the cabin, reopened the door, and slammed it shut. He waited a few seconds, then opened the door again to find the sentry wide awake!

Lloyd and Esther had been married on 11 December 1917, and Mother accompanied Lloyd to Panama. She was impressed by the number of workers carrying oil cans, who squirted oil onto every puddle of still water that they could find. This was done because mosquito larvae develop in still puddles. A little oil on the surface suffocates these larvae. Earlier, the French had tried to build the Panama Canal but were defeated largely by malaria, carried by mosquitoes.

Panama Geography and Inhabitants

The geography of the Panama Canal is strange, as shown on the accompanying map. The Pacific Ocean end of the canal is actually south and east of the Atlantic Ocean end.

Lloyd and Esther lived on the Pacific Ocean end, where rainfall is 90 inches a year, half of the amount that falls on the Atlantic side.

Each end of the canal is near a major city, but city visits from the canal zone were strictly limited. Father writes to his parents:

The moral conditions in Panama are, well, there aren't any. In the city of Panama alone . . . there are two hundred duly registered and licensed prostitutes, and heaven only knows how many others. At present, no man in uniform is allowed outside of the Canal Zone. . . . Any soldier who is found outside the Zone without authority gets a minimum of six months in the coop. . . . The men kick like steers, but it's a mighty good thing all the same. That order restricting soldiers to the Zone went into effect about six months



ago. Up to that time the average rate at which new venereal cases were contracted on this post alone was seventy-five per month. It is now six per month. . . . I sure am proud of old U.S.A. when I compare the Zone with the surrounding territory. . . . I may become a rampant socialist if I stay here long enough.

The First World War ended on November 11, 1918. Father finished his Ph. D. at the University of Chicago.

The General Exam

One of the requirements for receiving a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago was mastery of the field of physics as a whole – mechanics, heat, sound, light, thermodynamics, electricity and magnetism, atomic and nuclear structure, and so on, still a task for many modern physics Ph. D. degrees – but not at Harvard in my time, thank God!

Father went to work on this task in the usual wonky Taylor fashion. To improve his chances of sleeping well, Mother and Father went to bed five minutes later every night: Five minutes later the first night, ten minutes later the second night, fifteen minutes later the third night, and so forth.

On the morning of the exam, Mother noticed that Father's hand shook when he stirred his coffee. She worried about this, but said

nothing. When he returned home after the exam, he said it went OK. Mother mentioned the shaking hand and asked about it. Father said, "Oh, that was not a sign of nervousness; that shaking hand runs in the family!"

Father must have passed the general exam. He received his Ph.D. in 1922 and became Head of the Department of Physics at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.

"Lloyd Taylor roaring drunk"

Father was quite active in some local or state Republican Party committee in Lorain County, Oberlin, Ohio. He was retiring from this committee when another member said that he had failed to accomplish his main goal in being a member of this committee. Father asked what that goal was and reported with a smile the other's response:

"To see Lloyd Taylor roaring drunk."

Sister Ruth

My sister, Ruth Mildred Taylor, was born eight years before me, an interval long enough so that we rarely competed. Her in-laws taught Ruth to read and write before she was six years old, so she skipped an early grade. See "Ruth & Harold" later in this document.

123 Forest Street

Our family rented and later bought a large Victorian house at 123 Forest Street in Ober-

Map of Panama, with the canal running between Colón and Panama City.

lin. As they declined with age, my grandparents – first the Taylors, then the Blisses – came to live with us. My mother remarked later that the presence of her parents or in-laws inhibited her from running to throw her arms around her husband every day as he returned from work.

Among my happiest memories are the lively conversations as we gathered with grandparents for supper around our big dining room table. Topics ranged from the latest news to family stories. As a small boy I once announced as we sat down to eat, “Let’s all laugh!”

In the adjacent living room, we had two encyclopedias. One was the famous ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in

which, for example, the article on electricity and magnetism was written by James Clerk Maxwell, who had developed the equations that describe electromagnetism. The other was *Nelson’s Perpetual Loose-Leaf Encyclopedia*. Updated pages arrived periodically by mail, and Father dutifully unlocked the appropriate volumes and substituted the new pages, throw-

ing away the old. It was essentially a paper version of our modern online Google. These encyclopedias were constantly consulted and never cooled down during our dinner table conversations.

For years Father would not buy a radio because he did not want Ruth to learn jazz, in his eyes a decadent form of music. This changed when the Second World War began in 1939. Our radio was in the living room, separated from the dining room by a wide doorway. Father bought a clock that could be set to turn on the radio for the fifteen-minute news program by Lowell Thomas, then turn it off at the end of the program. When the news began, there was a pause in our dinner-table conversation which resumed fifteen minutes later at the end of the news program.

Discussing Emotions

Years later my close friend Alex Heingartner asked me, “Are you angry with me?” The question astonished me. I hurriedly said no. Later I realized that in our family we did not express emotions explicitly. For example, no family member would ever say to another, “I was upset by what you said last night about...” In our family everything important was objective. Love was deeply present, but we did not discuss our emotions in public and probably in private only among married couples.

Objective Intimacy

When my parents came to bed later in the evening, Father would enter my bedroom and slide his hand under my pajamas to place it on my naked butt. This gave him a rough reading of core temperature, informing his decision whether or not to add a blanket. It was also, inevitably, a gesture of intimate family love.

A near-universal experience of childhood is terror of a monster lurking under the bed or in the closet. One time my screams brought Father upstairs from an adult social event on the first floor. In a jolly mood, he grandly offered to grab the monster “by the braids and toss him out of the window.” A thorough search found nothing, of course, and he returned to the company below.

Grandmothers

For both the grandparents, first the Taylors and then the Blisses, the grandfather died first – in both cases of heart attack – leaving the grandmother to have the larger influence on my life. Grandmother Taylor had long white hair that reached below her waist. She brushed it 100 times every day, combed it with aromatic Bay Rum, then put it up in a bun. Her first-floor bedroom had an attached bathroom, which I often used. One night I woke up sitting on the toilet in this bathroom. Evidently, I had sleepwalked down from my second-floor bedroom. I was terrified and climbed into Grandmother Taylor’s bed where she snuggled and reassured me.

Grandmother Bliss, who occupied this bedroom later was emotionally more distant.

She owned a 22-caliber revolver that she let me play with. There was no ammunition, so no danger of my firing the weapon. [I hear someone say, "Famous last words."] Handling this weapon – a potential death-dealing instrument – gave me an immense sense of power. Memory of this feeling helps me to understand why some people boost their egos with ownership of weapons.

Grandmother Bliss had poor eyesight and spent most of her time listening to various commentators on the radio. We were a staunchly Republican household. I remember grandmother Bliss remarking to Mother about a particular commentator, "Esther, I think he must be a regular old Democrat!"

Once I told Grandma Bliss that when I entered her dark bedroom I felt along the wall for the light switch. Apparently, she worried that my dirty fingers would leave marks on the wall. Later I overheard Mother say to her, "Momma, I can't tell Edwin not to feel along the wall for the light switch!"

Technology

At 123 Forest Street we had a literal "ice box" in an enclosed but unheated porch behind our kitchen. Once a week an iceman delivered a big block of ice to a door in this icebox, which kept cold the other parts of the enclosure. I learned later that the person who built the machines that froze ice had a terrible time eliminating air pockets in the blocks of ice that made the blocks look milky. Consumers demanded that ice blocks be clear of these air pockets, even though they did not change the amount of ice delivered: Air pockets did not add to the weight of the block: A pound of ice is pound of ice, whether or not it contains air pockets.

Later Father bought Mother a Servel refrigerator, whose refrigeration cycle ran on natural gas, so did not require a mechanical compressor. In this sense the Servel had "no moving parts." Ultimately, gas refrigerators lost to the electric competition due to the fact that gas is no longer piped into modern houses.

[The "no moving parts" slogan reminds me of the remarkably prescient 1956 science fiction masterwork *The City and the Stars* by

Arthur C. Clark, which describes life on earth a billion years from now. One of the requirements in his fictional future is that "No machine shall have any moving part."]

The system of delivering milk to Oberlin households provided a diversion in our weekday one-mile trip home after school. The milkman delivered milk in a horse-drawn wagon. The driver stood on a running-board across the back of the wagon. Between houses he put the correct number of full milk and cream bottles into a metal carrier. The horse stopped automatically at each house and waited patiently as the milkman took his carrier of full bottles to each back porch and returned with the empties. Sometimes we stood on the back running board and chatted with the friendly driver. Of course, riding on the milk wagon was slower – but more fun – than simply walking on the sidewalk.

On Saturdays and Sundays, milk was delivered early in the morning, before we were out of bed. On cold days the milk froze and expanded, pushing the cardboard cover upward out of the bottle. Cream was at the top of the bottle, so the result was a frozen cylinder of ice, a delicious weekend delicacy that was literally "ice cream."

Electric Power in Oberlin

Father took me to visit the Oberlin electric power plant on the other side of the railroad tracks. I was overwhelmed by the immense diesel-powered generators, which today remind me of the phrase "the keen, unpassioned beauty of a great machine" from the poem "The Great Lover" by Rupert Brooke. Oberlin



Ruth Mildred Taylor and Edwin Floriman Taylor, ca. 1934.

tried to arrange a standby connection to the larger power companies in case our plant shut down temporarily, but the big companies refused. As a result, Oberlin occasionally suffered an electric blackout, which was great fun for me. During one such blackout Father set up multiple candles on our dining room table and took a large mirror off the wall whose reflected light doubled the light provided by these candles. With gales of laughter, Ruth and a male student friend did homework in front of this jerry-rigged light source.

I was too young to kid Father about the essential socialism of our electric power – ownership by Oberlin Township of the means of electricity production.

“The most fascinating subject in the world”

Esther Taylor was known as a good conversationalist. She engaged her many old friends in subjects important to them both. She could chat comfortably with a young student waiting to pick up a friend on the second floor. Mother had a formula: Get the visitors to talk about themselves. Mother called this universal trait “The most fascinating subject in the world – themselves.”

Once started, Mother egged the visitor on with relevant questions and exclamations of surprise and wonder. She was genuinely interested in their responses and preoccupations. One subject led to another, and sometimes opened up personal secrets a visitor would not otherwise reveal. Gossip has always been universal, but in those days, there were many intimate subjects that respectable people did not discuss openly. When Mother shared some of these subjects with me as an older youth, I was cautioned to keep them private, a new category of thought for me. My practical mind hadn’t yet conceived that some information was socially sensitive and required discretion.

Was Mother Trying to “Pass”?

Mrs. Dixon was a Black woman who cleaned and did the laundry for us. She and Mother called each other “Mrs. Taylor” and “Mrs. Dixon,” a signal that they were in the North where every adult had equal status.

Most of the time our family did not own a

car. Once in a while Mrs. Dixon drove Mother to a supermarket where they laughed and carried on a lively conversation as they shopped. Other shoppers looked sharply at Mother. Was she trying to “pass”? – a topic of fascination in both white and black communities.

Due to mixed ancestry, some individuals in southern black communities were nearly white in color. In the South these people could “pass” as white.

In the North they could appear in public with black relatives without fear of harassment. Other shoppers wondered whether Mother was such a black visitor from the South, white enough to “pass” in the North.

The Howl of Death?

One time when Mrs. Dixon was with us, a small dog sat down at the bottom of our back steps, raised his snout in the air, and emitted a ghostly howl. It sent a chill up Mother’s spine and had a clear meaning for Mrs. Dixon: “Mrs. Taylor, someone’s gonna die!” she declared.

A few weeks later Mrs. Dixon reported to Mother a death elsewhere in town which she said was predicted by the dog howling in our back yard. Mother asked, “Why did the dog come to howl at *my* back steps?” Mrs. Dixon did not know, but to her the connection was clear.

Sabbatical in England

In the academic year 1935-36 Father had a sabbatical leave from Oberlin College that he chose to spend in England doing research for his introductory textbook *Physics, the Pioneer Science*, in which each physics topic was introduced using its historical origins. I celebrated my fourth birthday at Stonehenge, a prehistoric monument on Salisbury Plain in southwest England, at a time when visitors could walk freely through the site.

My sister Ruth, the quiet one of the family, collected information about our visit to England that later appeared in a personal biography for a ninth-grade Oberlin English class under the title “A World to See” that received an A+. Nine years later I wrote my autobiography for the same English teacher that received “only” an A, one of the few times I felt in competition with Ruth.

In contrast to quiet Ruth, at four years old I was a bundle of energy in England, yelling, and stamping on the famous graves in cathedrals we visited. To burn off my energy, Father climbed church towers with Ruth and me. Mother, with weak knees, stayed below.

Ruth graduated from Oberlin College in 1945. Her subsequent life – including her marriage to Harold Aubrey Deery – is described in the chapter “Ruth & Harold.”

“Rewards are sometimes useful.”

Every morning, British schools began with the class singing “God Save the King.” For some reason, this caused me to burst into tears. Mother was at her wits’ end. She asked an Oberlin psychologist who was also on sabbatical in England. He mused, “Rewards are sometimes useful.” Mother told me that if I would not cry for a month at these celebrations, she would take me to Winchester Cathedral. I agreed, kept composed for a month, and enjoyed the trip with my mother. After that I no longer wept for the king.

Swinging on a Gate

We lived in half a house on a street of identical houses. Our driveway had a gate that had to be opened to let us drive into the garage. My friends and I swung on that gate as it opened and closed. Of course, that made it sag. Instead of telling us not to do that, father mounted a metal diagonal turn-screw from the top hinge to the lower trailing edge. Tightening the turn-screw supported our weight so we could swing on the gate to our heart’s content.

“God rest you merry gentlemen”

At Christmas time, individual singers would go from house to house singing Christmas songs. We gave each one a few coins and they moved on to the next house.

History-Motivated Textbooks

Many years later, after I had graduated from Oberlin College as a physics major, I realized the flaw in Father’s assumption that students would be strongly motivated to learn a subject by an historical account of its origins. Most students don’t give a damn about history; they

just want to know what will be on the next quiz or test. Actually, Father implicitly knew this too. When I was a child, father let me and my friends sit in on his lectures, which often began with a five-minute quiz on a single concept from the reading assigned for that day. A student’s semester grade depended in part on his or her performance on these quizzes. They also provided motivation to attend class.

Physics the Pioneer Science did have a future as source material for teachers who wanted to spice up their lectures with some historical stories and references.

Demonstration Lectures

Father’s specialty was demonstration lec-

tures, for which he spent a large amount of time preparing. As an example, some of Father’s ex-students told me that they especially appreciated

Father’s first lecture, which illustrated some of the subjects to be covered during the coming semester. He began with the lecture itself, how light and the structure of the eye influenced what they were about to learn, that the eye inverted the image of what they saw and how part of growing up was teaching the brain how to re-invert the image to make it right-side up.

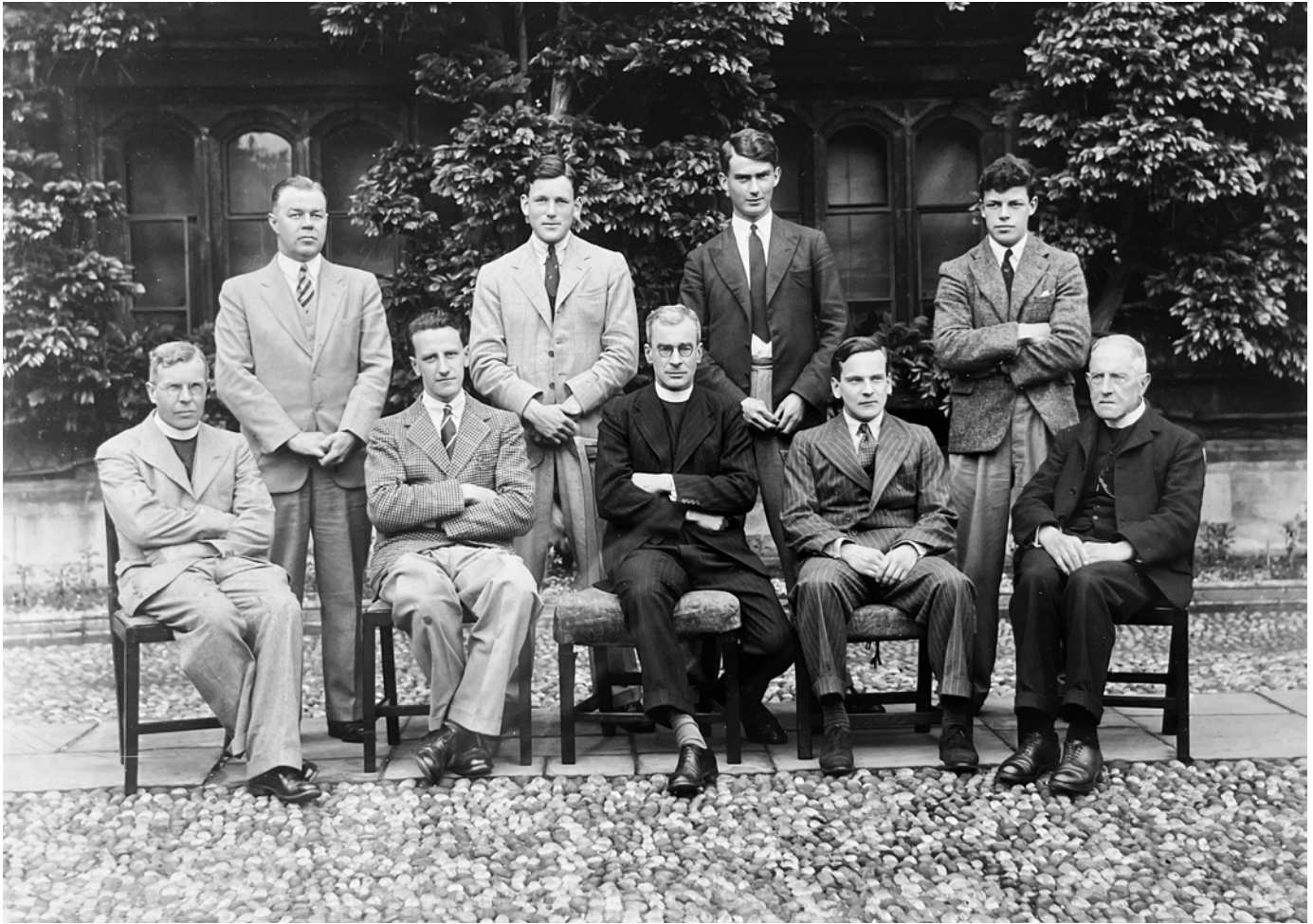
The first lecture ended as Father turned off the electricity to a large electromagnet at the back of the room, which dropped a load of junk onto the floor, leading to a study of electromagnetism, sound, and possibly sparks of light. What was left over to be accounted for by chemistry? The smell!

Not Teach Ruth

Father thought it was inappropriate for him to have Ruth in his class because of the obvious conflict of interest between the roles of parent



Edwin (right) and an unidentified friend, swinging on the entry gate in Cambridge, England, ca. 1935.



Lloyd William Taylor (standing, left) with his change-ringing group in Cambridge, England, 1936.

and teacher. That changed when World War II began and Father wanted Ruth to get the best possible background in physics – from him! I assume that Father turned over calculating Ruth’s grade to a disinterested third party.

Tower Bells

When we were in England, Father became interested in the ringing of church tower bells, which followed incomprehensible patterns instead of recognizable tunes. In the United States and on continental Europe, tower bells remain stationary and are struck with hammers controlled by an array of levers. In contrast, tower bells in England do not play tunes, and for an interesting technical reason: In England, every tower bell is mounted on a wheel which rotates through a large angle each time it strikes. The resulting sound is much more resonant, rolling out over the countryside from the wide mouth of the rotating bell.

The swing of each heavy bell takes five

or ten seconds, so a single bell cannot play tunes, in which a one tone may sound over and over. For example, the Christmas carol “Joy to the World” contains the phrase “heaven and na-ture [sing]”. The first four syllables in this phrase repeat the same tone four times in a row – impossible for a ponderous tower bell mounted on a rotating wheel. Therefore, tower bells in England play patterns in which the same bell never rings two or more times in a row.

Change Ringing

The patterns played by English tower bells intrigued Father. A friend took him into a bell tower where he met the group that rang the bells, one bell per person. Father noticed immediately that this was the only non-professional hobby that included men – and in more recent years women – from all classes, a striking difference from, say, polo or collegiate rowing.

In patterns played by tower bells, no single bell ever plays twice in a row. Below is

an example of how this is done. Number from one to eight the major tones in an octave from top to bottom. Then the bells might be played in the following sequence. Notice that a given bell never moves more than a single position (as necessary for tower bells).

This particular pattern is called “plain hunting.” Each sequential pattern of bells in the list below is called a change.

- 12345678
the scale from top to bottom,
called “rounds”
- 21436587
interchange each pair of bells
- 24163857
first and last bells stationary,
interchange intermediate pairs
- 42618375
interchange each pair of bells
- 46281735
first and last bells stationary,
interchange intermediate pairs
- 64827153
and so on
- 68472513
- 86745231
- 87654321
scale from bottom bell to top bell:
half way back to “rounds”
- 78563412
- 75836142
- 57381624
- 53718264
- 35172846
- 31527486
- 13254768
- 12345678
back to “rounds,” the scale from
top to bottom: home again”

Notice that in plain hunting, no bell ever moves more than one place in sequential changes. The same is true for every other pattern played by tower bells. A so-named caller shouts out the pattern to be played and how it is changed instantaneously as playing continues. Ahead of time, the caller plots out the full sequence so that no two changes in the entire “ring” are identical. Bell ringers never have these patterns written down in front of them

as they pull the bell rope. You can see that change ringing requires intense concentration.

A Peal

A peal is the sequential ringing of 5000 or more changes in a row under rigidly-specified conditions, including that no two changes in the entire “ring” have the same pattern. For eight bells there are 40,320 POSSIBLE different patterns; for seven bells 5040 different patterns; for six bells only 720. This means that seven bells are the smallest number on which a peal can be rung. A peal of 5000 changes takes about three hours to complete on tower bells. You do not want to live in a house near a tower where peals are rung.

The Nine Tailors

Change ringing on tower bells features centrally in the mystery story *The Nine Tailors* by Dorothy Sayers, originally published in 1934, the year before we went to England. The phrase “the nine tailors” refers to the nine “teller” strokes of a single bell that announced a death in the parish – in this case the New Year’s death of the old year and birth of the new.

To quote Google: “Lord Peter Wimsey featured in eleven novels and two sets of short stories. Sayers once commented that Lord Peter was a mixture of Fred Astaire and Bertie Wooster” of the Jeeves stories by P. G. Wodehouse. As such, he could be both competent and light-hearted.

The Nine Tailors is chock full of change-ringing lingo but written so that those of us with only a sketchy grasp of that complex hobby can follow the plot.

In *The Nine Tailors*, Lord Peter Wimsey and his manservant Bunter have a car accident near Fenchurch St. Paul where a monster peal of more than fifteen thousand changes

*Grandsire
Doubles six-bell
changes, from
the files of Lloyd
William Taylor.*

**Grandsire Doubles
20 changes**

~~xxxxxx~~

123456
123456
213546
231456
324156
342516
435216
453126
541326
514236
154326
145236
415326
451236
542136
524316
253416
235146
321546
312456
132546
123456

on eight tower bells is to be rung during the nine hours from midnight to nine AM to welcome in the new year. Because of the illness of one ringer, Lord Peter steps in to complete the eight ringers needed to carry out this task, which they do successfully.

Handbells

The English also ring handbells, small bells with leather handles. One can play changes with handbells, but more often they are used to play tunes which sometimes require a single handbell be rung several times in a row, as can be done with a snap of the wrist. The bells lie on a padded table; each player can pick up and play multiple bells as the tune requires. When we left England, Father ordered a set of handbells consisting of four chromatic octaves, which our family still owns.

“We should have gone to Paris”

In later years, Mother often said that she regretted that our family had not borrowed the extra money to go to Paris during Father’s sabbatical in England. As she looked back on her life, she did not regret spending extra money but usually did regret not borrowing and spending extra money when appropriate.

As a four-year-old child, I would not have had any memory of the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany during our 1935-36 sabbatical in England.

Army-Navy Club

Our family returned to Oberlin. David Kinsey and I, with a gang of other boys, used a utility cabin behind our house as an Army-Navy clubhouse. David was the head of the Navy, the more prestigious position; I was the head of the Army. A secret compartment under a removable floor-board contained a terrible weapon, the fallen fruit of a female Ginkgo biloba tree that grew in our front yard.

This fruit – bigger than a large cherry – contained butyric acid, which smells like rancid butter or vomit. We enhanced this smell by bottling the fruit in an ammonia solution available in grocery stores. The resulting weapon was never used in anger, probably because

none of our boyhood friends were willing to play the German or Japanese military. Today it may still be in the secret compartment under those floorboards.

Next to the clubhouse was a beech tree, in which my father helped us to mount a platform. Father’s inventive design did not require any nails to be driven into the tree itself. We could swing from the beech tree limbs to the roof of the clubhouse.

Wilbur and Orville Wright

Just after WW2, when I was about 15 years old, my father supervised the building of the new Wilbur and Orville Wright Physics Building. Orville Wright, the surviving brother, came to town to participate in the dedication. (The brothers did not even graduate from high school.) My father bought their book on the development of the airplane and, while I waited in the car, went into the house where Orville was staying and got his signature in the book.

Later, when I was at Harvard graduate school in Boston, I sold it to a used book dealer for \$150.

Orville donated to Oberlin College the small wind-tunnel the brothers used to design the shape of the wings for maximum lift.

Alex Heingartner Arrives

Alexander Heingartner – “Alex” – entered my life in 1942 when his family moved into a house two doors away from ours on Forest Street in Oberlin. Alex was 12 years old; I was 11. As neighbors and best friends, Alex and I came of age together.

I had an older sister Ruth; Alex had an older sister Gladys.

Alex’s father Robert Heingartner was a retired US Foreign Service officer whose major posting had been in Frankfurt, Germany, where he watched the Nazis come to power. Alex’s mother died in Germany. As the war became imminent, Robert took a final position in Western Canada. After Canada he retired to Oberlin.

By 1942, when Alex and his family arrived in Oberlin, World War II was well under way. From his childhood days in Frankfurt, Germa-

ny, Alex had a foot-and-half long toy model of an open German limousine. Hitler sat in the back seat with a right arm hinged to provide the Nazi salute. Of course, Alex remained a patriotic American.

The Telegraph

With my father's help, Alex and I strung a telegraph line between our houses, across the back yard of the four-family apartment house between. We sent Morse code messages to each other which neither of us could decipher. We had to follow up each message with a telephone call to learn what meaning was intended.

Robert Heingartner and Aunt Rae

Alex's father Robert seemed to me gentle and retiring. They had a large 16-millimeter movie reel of silent cartoons. Occasionally Robert set up the projector and played these cartoons for us.

Alex's father died after they had been in Oberlin a year or two. His father's sister Rae Heingartner moved into their house. Aunt Rae had no children and little idea how to supervise teenager Alex. Her motherly instincts were spent on her little wire-haired terrier dog named Benji whom Alex, of course, despised.

Tom Mix, Jack Armstrong, and Captain Midnight

At the end of every weekday afternoon there were a series of fifteen-minute adventure broadcasts on the radio, aimed at young boys. The cowboy Tom Mix, Captain Midnight, and Jack Armstrong the All-America Boy sold breakfast food by offering to send code rings and other paraphernalia for several box tops plus dimes or quarters using jingles such as:

Take a tip from Tom,
Go and tell your mom
Shredded Ralston can't be beat.

At the end of some programs, a short simple-substitution code message was read off that we could decipher with our code ring or badge to predict the next-day's adventure.

Woodworking

Father and I built a rough workbench in our basement on which we installed a small motor-driven drill press and lathe to make simple products. It was good experience, helping me to appreciate more elegant cabinetmaking and to pay attention to safety, a central consideration with power tools. The by-product, of course, was a collaborative relationship between father and son, giving us an objective subject for discussion.

Catholic instruction

Alex's sister Gladys became a Roman Catholic. With the enthusiasm of the newly-converted, Gladys made Alex promise that he would take Catholic instruction. Alex asked me to take in-



struction with him and surprisingly my mother agreed. We met weekly with Father Englehardt, the local Catholic priest, and worked our way through the instruction booklet intended for eight-year-olds: The booklet asked, "What is the chief end of man?" We penciled in the answer: "It is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever" and so on.

At the end of these consultations, Father Englehardt gave us each a rosary blessed by the Pope and said, "I am glad we had these conversations." He did not take the stronger stand that we were now required to convert to Catholicism. Alex remained protestant.

Edwin (sitting front, holding camera) with high school friends in 1949. Alex Heingartner is at the top center in an Oberlin t-shirt. David Kinsey, mentioned in "Our 1936 Cadillac," is to the right of Alex, with his elbow on the car.

"It's amazing what you can do"

Father owned a cornet that I learned to play, partly through tutorials from Oberlin Conservatory students. I played in the high school band, which was a marching band during football season and a concert band the rest of the year.

When I was a high-school junior, the first chair trumpet was played by senior Bob Baxter, a remarkably proficient player. The following year I was going to become first chair cornet after Bob's graduation. I told him I did not know how I was going to meet the challenge. He replied, "It is amazing what you can do when you know that if you don't do it, nobody else will."

Student Roomers and Cherry Bombs

My father's death left my mother Esther a widow in our huge Victorian house with six bedrooms on the second and third floors plus one for her on the first floor. For years we had rented the second- and third-floor rooms to Oberlin College and Conservatory students. Alex entered Oberlin College and occupied one of these rooms.

The roomers presented a fascinating variety of personalities, including Ken Cox, who became one of Alex's lifelong best friends. Ken had the precise, careful, wry personality of a philosopher. He once showed us with amusement a philosophy book index which had the entry "Christ, J."

In those days fireworks could still be purchased for July fourth celebrations. The most powerful legal firecracker was called a cherry bomb. Late one night we heard caterwauling in the neighbor's yard. Alex stepped out of his bedroom window, stood on the roof of the first-floor porch below, and flung a lighted cherry bomb at the cats. The huge explosion woke the alarmed neighborhood and sent the cats fleeing to parts unknown.

Alex and I remained in touch as long as we were both alive. Our common loss of a father bound us in ways we never discussed. Looking back together, we often celebrated the creativity of our youthful comments on the world around us, near and far.

Alex died 27 March 2022 at the age of 91 years and 4 months. What he and I shared

remains my precious memory of our time as best friends.

The Danforth Foundation

The life of William H. Danforth, founder of the Ralston Purina Company, was transformed by a teacher when he was a boy. He thought of becoming a teacher himself, but – as he put it – "God gave me a trading mind." He founded Ralston Purina Company – now called Purina. He could put the profits into The Danforth Foundation without paying income tax on them. One of the projects of the foundation was to support graduate students who considered college teaching "to be a Christian vocation."

I was a perfect candidate for a Danforth fellowship. I was very religious and had considered becoming a minister. Finally – thank God! – I chose physics teaching instead. I loved Big Ideas and might have been a tolerable preacher, but had zero street savvy, with no clue how the world really operates.

I applied and received a letter welcoming me to the second year of the Danforth Fellowship program. They paid my way through graduate school at Harvard, including living expenses, and my wife Helen's graduate degree in music education from Boston University. Deciding the total amount for the yearly grant was magnificently simple: we submitted a budget for all expenses, and they approved it. I do not remember that they ever suggested a reduction in our submitted budget.

There were other programs in the Danforth Foundation, which went out of business in 2011, having given away a billion dollars in this and other grants.

Ellie and Helen

When I was a junior in Oberlin College and Alex was a senior, I met first-year student Helen Thompson and Alex met first-year student Ellie Bower. Years later we were each best man at the other's wedding.

This provides a natural coda to my parents' lives and my growing up. Together with the chapters "Our 1936 Cadillac" and "Father's Death," they fill out the account of my childhood and youth.

THE OBSERVER

REMEMBERING EDWIN MEETEER BLISS

This memorial statement was written and shared by Edwin F. Taylor and Ruth Taylor Deery at the burial of the ashes of Edwin Meeteer Bliss in the family plot in Grinnell, Iowa.

Edwin Meeteer Bliss spent much of his life as a salesman and store manager in Chicago Illinois; Marshalltown, Iowa; Princeton, Illinois; and finally Casper, Wyoming. He liked people in small doses but detested the mob psychology of commercialism. Late in his career he became a store display manager, which allowed him to be near customers without having to deal with them directly. As display manager he relished the Christmas season as much as he had rued it as a salesman. He wrote, "After the horrors of the Christmas rush were over, the woman who was manager of Wards mail-order department quit. She said she was going to try to get a job washing dishes. I told her I knew she would be happy."

Edwin's delicious tongue-in-cheek writing style comes out in his advertising copy, which slyly undercuts the commercialism of his employer. Here is an example:

A LITTLE SERMON ON POLO SHIRTS

You too can be happy! Notice the self-satisfied smile on the face of the man in the picture. He is happy. He has just been down to the Commissary and bought a polo shirt. He is cool, he can display his muscles, and he spent only a dollar thirty-nine.

Edwin Bliss was witty, kind, courteous, retiring, conscientious, and caring. Edwin Taylor was named after him. He was a voracious and discriminating reader and, like his sister [our mother Esther], a writer of letters to the editor. He liked out-of-doors and quiet times hiking. He hoped in vain that Casper, Wyoming, would

stay small and unpopulated. Perhaps his best letter to the editor was on this subject. The "stagnant community" to which he refers in this letter is Grinnell, Iowa.

Apron-string futile

EDITOR:

A few days ago, an editorial in the *Star-Tribune* stated that Casper must either grow or stagnate.

I was raised in a very stagnant community. On the day I was born the town contained 5,000 people. When I left, many years later, the number was the same minus one.

We had a fine schools system, a fine sewer system, a fine water system, a fine fire department, a fine one-man police department, and no sweat, no bond elections, and no sales tax. It was very stagnant.

But the apron-string philosophy (let's keep our innocent youth at home) was as futile then as it is today, and when I reached Wyoming I fell in love with the then quiet mountains and lonely plains. In those days you could wander for hours on Casper Mountain without seeing a man, a house, a beer can, or a no-trespassing sign. The road was narrow and rough but it was safe.

I could never understand why more people who would be happy with more people don't go where there are more people. Why not move to Chicago, Washington D.C. or Detroit, and attain instant happiness? No waiting – and at the same time contribute to universal happiness. For then we, the shiftless, unambitious folks back home could wallow happily in our pleasant stagnation.

This letter is not to incite contention but, perhaps, to prompt contemplation in some quiet spot – if you can find one.

E. M. Bliss

Uncle Edwin had the combination of laughter and brooding sadness of many great humorists. He wrote to his sister Esther, "I feel a sad pity for all humans and animals when they aren't irritating me so much I can hardly stand it." In another letter he said, "... in speaking of your grandchildren, you say 'What a pity each one is not a triplet or at least a twin!' Do you

"I could never understand why more people who would be happy with more people don't go where there are more people."

really mean that? Have you looked at the population figures, at the world, at mental hospitals, at arthritis, at lupus erythematosus, at Russian slave labor camps – and at the slaves in American chain stores? People seem – some of them – to be breeding children to play with like toys, to study, to laugh at, to feel a glow over. Have they no pity?"

In spite of his love of privacy, Edwin played banjo in dance groups in the thirties and forties and, just for the fun of it, in the sixties. He continued to play banjo for himself nearly until his death. He liked

good music, especially the good old melodic singable tunes. He wrote, "I don't care for Rock and Roll, nor to tell the truth do I care for classical music, though not with the revulsion I feel for Rock and Roll. I don't care for the less strenuous music of the 30's, 40's, and 50's either. I'm living in the past. With tears in my eyes, I play the beloved songs of the 20's on my banjo."

Edwin was four and one half years younger than his sister Esther. When Esther was afflicted with rheumatic fever as a teenager, Edwin pushed her in a wheelchair for more than a year. Many years before that, when they were quite small, Edwin, in his bashful way, once asked Esther, "When we grow up, will you marry me?" She, older and aware of social conventions, still wanted to respond to his need for assurance. So, after thinking it over for a minute, she replied, "If you still want me to."

Edwin Bliss was married to Lillian North for more than 31 years until her death. They had a daughter, now Evelyn Reddin. Subsequently, Edwin was married to Lois Hall for more than 25 years until his death. Lois says simply, "He was the best husband I could have had and he is sorely missed."

RUTH & HAROLD

THE TEACHER/DECODER AND THE LOVABLE OLD BEAR

The Only Child

Ruth Mildred Taylor, first child of Lloyd W. Taylor and Esther Bliss Taylor, was born 23 April 1923 in Chicago, Illinois, and died almost 85 years later on 3 March 2008 in Portland, Oregon.

As an only child for eight years before I was born, Ruth bore the brunt of our family's Puritan tradition. Photos in a family album show Ruth's hands encased in aluminum cups to prevent thumb-sucking. In school years Mother insisted that Ruth wear long black stockings in spite of Ruth's constant pleas not to wear them. Mother later regretted her insistence.

Ruth had some only-child advantages. One Christmas she was so delighted with her presents under the tree that Father and Mother wrapped them up again for the next morning. Ruth's delight continued, so they were re-wrapped and opened a third time.

In another Christmas story, Mother told me that once my sister Ruth said, "Now, when Santa Claus comes..." Mother interjected, "You know, Ruth, that there is no Santa Clause. His presents are actually from family members who love you." Ruth replied, "Yes, I know. Now, when Santa Clause comes..."

Ruth was an excellent student. In her day each high school teacher gave grades in "bed-sheet" form: multiple grades for different aspects of each course. Half-way through one semester, Ruth received an A in every aspect of every course except an A minus for "social adjustment in science." Father chuckled about this and somehow the science teacher heard about his reaction. At the end of the semester Ruth received a science grade of A in social adjustment as well.

I remember Ruth as an inveterate collector: On the back of her bedroom-door she posted the leaf of every kind of tree in the neighborhood.

Sibling Rivalry

Because Ruth was eight years my senior, each of us was typically in a different stage of growing up. I recall only two occasions on which we competed, one of them minor: Before I could read, I found the comics in the daily *Christian Science Monitor* by leafing through the entire issue. Ruth said to me, "If you will stop bugging me, I'll show you how to find the comics." I agreed. She flipped over the first section of the paper and opened the last page to find the comics – rather bland in nature because Christian Scientists believe a benevolent God to be in charge.

Our in-laws taught Ruth how to read and write, so she skipped a grade, and thereafter was a year younger than her classmates. I think this resulted in some social isolation during her school years – and perhaps was the cause of the A minus grade for "social adjustment in science."

The major competition between us, I recall, occurred when each of us wrote an autobiography in the ninth grade for the same teacher, Mrs. Maude Warner. Ruth's autobiography, called "A World to See," recounted our family trip to England for Father's sabbatical in 1935-36. Ruth received an A+. Nine years later, when I and Mrs. Warner had our conference

Ruth Mildred Taylor, age 9 months, with Esther Bliss Taylor.



about my autobiography, the assigned grade was written A with a small dash after the letter. I asked if that was an A minus; she said no and hurriedly put a parenthesis around the dash.

Ruth and Iggy

Mother's brother Edwin Bliss lived with his wife Lillian in Casper, Wyoming. Their daughter named Evelyn was a year younger than Ruth. Edwin and Lillian really did not want children, a fact they shared with Evelyn. When it came time for her to attend college, she came east to live with us while she went to Oberlin College.

Evelyn's last name was Bliss; her nick name was Iggy, because "Ignorance is bliss." Evelyn was as extroverted as Ruth was introverted,

and they got along famously. After supper they washed the dishes with gales of laughter, which accompanied every other adventure together.

"Not at the front"

At the age of 10, of course I fell instantly in love with Evelyn, and I was not the only one. Another college student Daniel

Reddin saw Evelyn on her bicycle and said to himself, "That is the girl I'm going to marry." During WWII Dan was in the Army Quartermaster Corps that supplied the Army in Europe. Dan and Evelyn were married in Fairchild Chapel, part of Oberlin's small Theology School. A friend and I were ushers and Dan rewarded us each with a paratrooper's knife, a terrifying weapon for close-combat.

With a flick of the wrist, a five-inch knife slid out of its handle. From the handle also unfolded a so-called "neck spike" for silent disposal of a sentry.

A friend of Dan's said, "I thought you needed to account for supplies you handed out as a quartermaster." Dan replied, "Not at the front."

World War II

During the second World War, Ruth was in Washington, DC, as a WAVE, the Women's Auxiliary Volunteer Enlisted Service, which provided our navy with partially-decoded Japanese secret messages that led to the US naval victory at Midway Island in the Pacific Ocean, as dramatized in the 2019 film *Midway*.

Of course, Ruth could not tell me about her work, but she sent me the book *Secret and Urgent: The Story of Codes and Ciphers*, which is still in print. This was decades before the computer provided code-creating and code-breaking possibilities such as that dramatized in the 2014 film *The Imitation Game*, in which Benedict Cumberbatch plays Alan Turing, who designed the early computer that broke the German Enigma code.

Romance

At a square dance in Washington, DC, Ruth met Harold Aubrey Deery, an applied chemist who designed small rockets. Before marines landed on a Pacific island, distant warships pounded the beaches, but this bombardment had to stop when the marines got into the landing craft. This gave the Japanese defenders a few minutes to reoccupy the beaches. To prevent this, some of the landing craft were packed with small rockets, essentially rocket-propelled hand-grenades. These swept the beach and nearby jungle with shrapnel until a few seconds before the marines landed. Harold Deery was part of a team that designed these rockets.

Fire Lookout

Harold, son of a laborer, was a self-made man who rose in the world through his mastery of technology – a living example of the American Dream. In many ways Harold was a natural. For example, he liked the music of Johann Sebas-



Edwin and Ruth, ca. 1946

tian Bach the first time he heard it.

As a young man before the war, Harold spent summers manning a fire lookout tower on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State with a wide view of the forest. Smoke was evidence for a forest fire. Harold reported the direction of this smoke and a preliminary estimate of its distance. Its location was refined by triangulating Harold's angle to the fire with angles reported from other lookouts. Firefighters were sent to the resulting location.

In his lookout tower Harold had a problem with mice. For a while he used a mousetrap with bacon bait, but discovered that the mice were so stupid that they tripped the trap even if he replaced the bacon bait on the trigger with a piece of cardboard.

Harold's lookout job paid for his college tuition at the University of Washington, which was close enough to Harold's house so he could bicycle there. After the war, Harold used the G. I. Bill to get his master's degree in chemistry by correspondence.

Harold's Parents

Harold's mother Marie Kamla Deery came from Germany (Neander Valley region) at about the age of 16. She was one of 10 children and joined older brothers in Seattle. His father Aubrey Deery was not an immigrant; one of his ancestors came West in a covered wagon shortly before the railroad was completed.

"Rough Old Bear"

Harold's father was a tinner, who for instance made eaves and downspouts for houses. They raised Harold with a kind of domination that he abhorred. For example, they served him what he called "hot, raw carrots." Harold told them he would gladly eat either raw carrots or cooked carrots, but he disliked hot, raw carrots. At the next meal he faced another pile of hot, raw carrots.

Harold's personality was deeply stabilized by the certainties of science and technology and the obvious virtues of their truths, but without the Arts part of Liberal Arts, which can shape goals and smooth personalities on the road to a profession.

Ruth and Harold fell in love and decided

to marry. Ruth was defensive about the difference between our family's academic background and Harold's laborer father along with Harold's vocation in applied science. Ruth told her parents about Harold during a visit home and continued, "I hope you like Harold, but I am going to marry him whether you like him or not." Surprised and dismayed by this ultimatum, Father and Mother assured Ruth of their acceptance of whomever she chose.

When Harold finally met our parents, Father suggested that he go on to earn a Ph. D. in chemistry, but that was not part of Harold's ambition.

Many years later, when my second wife Carla met Harold, she was entranced, calling him "a loveable, rough old bear."

Pecking Order

Harold had two collie dogs on their Longview property. He watched them closely to find which dog was dominant, then favored this one with

extra attention in order to cement this dominance. Looking back decades later, I wonder if Harold carried this attitude of pecking order over into human interactions, seeing himself as the dominant one in the marriage.

When I first traveled cross-country by rail to visit Ruth and Harold in their first living space, a four-room house in Star Auto Park in Kelso (the twin city of Longview), Ruth met me



*Left to right:
Harold's
mother Marie
Kamala Deery,
Harold Deery,
Ruth Deery*

at the train station. We dragged my trunk into the back seat; the trunk's metal corner-protector scratched the cover of the back-seat cigarette ashtray. When we got to their house, Ruth rubbed some Simonize car wax into this scar and said, "Harold won't notice it."

Playing his role as dominant partner, Harold was gruff and idiosyncratic but not malicious. He could usually explain his commands with apparently sensible justifications. For example, when I read by artificial light in the evenings, he expressed his mild disapproval by calling the light bulb a "hundred-watt heater." It took me a while to realize that Harold was suggesting that instead I get up early to read by morning sunlight, which required no elec-

tricity.

On an occasion a couple of decades later, their two sons Ned and Kevin were helping him to start a fire in the yard, on which to cook some hot dogs, Harold fussed about the details. Finally, Ruth – exasperated – shouted,

"Harold, your children are grown men. Stop ordering them around!" In response, Harold did lighten up.

Camp Pemigewassett

To my regret, I was not at Ruth and Harold's wedding because I was at summer camp. My absence says something about our family's under-appreciation of the emotional importance of such milestone events. In the summers of 1943 through 1945 I attended a boys' summer camp called Pemigewassett (nick-name: Pemi) near Wentworth, New Hampshire. The camp was founded and run by four doctors, two of whom

were in the medical service at Oberlin College.

Summers at Pemi were good experiences for me, including introduction to different sports, mountain climbing, rifle target practice, and getting along with groups of boys. All three years I was a Polar Bear, which required jumping out of bed at reveille and leaping naked into the frigid waters of Lower Baker Pond on whose shore the camp was built.

During the awards ceremony one year I received the Good Citizenship award, with my name permanently engraved on the award cup. This award may have been because I negotiated between a bully and the rest of the boys in our cabin. The engraved cup was lost when the dining building burned down years later.

Boys from Oberlin and other North Ohio towns travelled together by rail to camp Pemi under the supervision of a grown-up. We took the New York Central railroad to Albany where we spent the night in a YMCA. That evening we amused ourselves by dropping water out of our window onto walkers on the sidewalk below. The next morning, we received a dressing-down by our supervisor, who thankfully could not tell which of us were guilty.

The last leg of the northward trip into New Hampshire took place on the Boston and Maine Railroad. We dubbed it Busted and Maimed because soot from the coal locomotives blew into the windows, necessarily open because of the heat.

Our counsellors were young men whose health problems disqualified them for the WW2 draft. For example, one had lost an eye, another could not run because his muscles seized up. Counselors were not allowed to smoke at Pemi, but we found dozens of cigarette butts behind a boulder on a path near the camp.

Doc Reed, one of the camp founders, was a creative composer of songs we sang around the campfire, some of which presented a healthy attitude toward sexuality. One included the lines

Went a climbin' over the mountains,
Saw a lovely view on the heights,
Saw a maiden clad in green bloomers,
And since then, I cannot sleep nights



*Ruth Deery,
date unknown*

.....

I've been wonderin'
If 'twould be blunderin'
To ask that girl, that Ogontz girl
To be my girl.

(Ogontz is the name of a lake in New Hampshire, and the girls' summer camp on that lake.)

It is hard to overemphasize the importance this wholesome attitude toward sex had on me, who came from a family that gave no explicit advice about feelings -- which left me under the Puritan influence of family tradition.

The nuclear bombs that ended World War II in the Pacific were dropped in 1945 during my last summer at camp Pemi. Strangely, nuclear security was compromised in a comic book, one of dozens that circulated informally through the camp. In this particular issue that came out before the actual bombs fell, a new, super-explosive called U-235 (the isotope of uranium used in the Hiroshima bomb) was dropped into the Japan Deep (the Ryukyu Trench) east of Japan's main island, which -- in the comic book story -- resulted in this island toppling into the trench.

Marriage

I was at Camp Pemi when Ruth and Harold were married on July 7, 1945, in Oberlin's First Congregational Church. I was told that Ruth and Harold wore their dress-up navy whites for the ceremony. Before the service, Ruth joined Father and a group of colleagues in the balcony to play the wedding march on our English handbells. Then Ruth and Father descended and walked down the aisle together to join Harold at the front of the sanctuary.

Two Wood-Product Companies

Longview, Washington, contained the two largest sawmills in the world. One of them, Long Bell, bought forested land, logged it, then sold off the land for a greatly reduced price. In contrast, Weyerhaeuser, where Harold worked, practiced "timber farming." They owned vast acres of forest, periodically logged it, leaving islands of unlogged trees to re-

seed the forest. They carefully supervised the growing timber, then between sixty and one hundred years later the new growth was ready for harvesting.

The fire watch described above preserved the un-logged forest used by Long Bell and reduced fires during the extended growth time of Weyerhaeuser's timber farms.

Harold's Position at Weyerhaeuser

In addition to producing construction lumber, Weyerhaeuser made large quantities of paper pulp, a remarkable process: Limbless tree trunks arrive by truck. High-pressure hoses blow the bark off each trunk. A monster machine, the whole-log chipper, turns the de-barked trunk into small chips, which are cooked (using the removed bark as some of the fuel) to remove the chemical lignin which holds together the cells in a growing tree. (Lignin also supplements the fuel used to cook the chips.) The

resulting pulp is washed, dried, and sold to companies that manufacture newsprint, paper for books, and other paper products.

This process uses huge amounts of water -- enough for a small city -- taken from the Columbia River and returned to the river after being cleaned. Harold supervised the provision of water for every stage in the paper-pulp production process and verified by his trips in a small boat that the water returned to the Columbia did not significantly pollute the river.

Mountain Climbing

Harold loved to climb mountains and explore



*Harold Deery,
date unknown*

wilderness on foot. Ruth was his not-so-enthusiastic companion. I also participated during my summer visits. Mostly these were day trips with an early-morning departure from home. At the starting point of several trails there was often a cabin with a ranger or two to give hiking advice and information about current conditions.

Just before starting our hike, Harold adjusted individual back packs to weights he considered appropriate for each of us. No one thought of complaining because Harold's backpack was always the heaviest.

These hikes revealed majestic wilderness views which Harold recorded with his Graflex press camera which took 4 by 5-inch negatives. Pictures were carefully composed, including those of his children in back woods settings.

We brought along a large 46-fluid-ounce can of Dole Pineapple Juice which we buried in snow at the edge of the first snow field. On our return along the same trail, we dug up and shared the pineapple juice, which by then was exactly at the melting temperature of ice.

Ruth remarked that she preferred calendars in her house that had pictures of the Swiss Alps, which she knew she would never have to climb.

Building a House

Long Bell Lumber Company owned wooded property outside the city limits of Longview, Washington. After World War II they divided some of this property into housing plots.

Ruth and Harold bought a large lot whose upper portion was level and big enough on which to build their residence and have a chicken coop, a large vegetable garden, and orchard. In front of the house the property descended steeply to a lower, level portion on which, years later, their youngest child Kevin built a residence of his own.

Ruth and Harold contracted for a construction company to build the rough basics of a house: its slab floor, its concrete-block shell, roof, interior walls, windows, a chimney with fireplace but no finishing of the interior. Initially there was no city water supply, so Ruth and Harold trucked in water in large bottles. Later a water line was installed from the street.

During the time of my visits, there was no city sewer hookup, so toilets and sinks drained into an underground septic system excavated on the property.

The kitchen started as a bare room. They contracted with a cabinetmaker to put in shelves, cabinets, places for sinks, a refrigerator, and so forth. Ruth reported that the cabinetmaker said he could tell from their design where she was going to put each resource: flour, sugar, dishes, flatware, trash, and so on.

When I came to live with Ruth and Harold in subsequent summers, I found employment in either Long Bell or Weyerhaeuser. I paid for my room and board by working an hour a day on the property, from painting to water-proofing the cement blocks of which the house was made, sawing up the stacked tree-trunks that Harold had cleared to make room for the house, and so forth.

Pumping a Swing

Years later, at the back of their house, Harold set up a tall swing 16 to 20 feet high for their children. The swing moved backward over level ground but forward over the steep drop in their property. Using elementary Newtonian mechanics, Harold developed a method for pumping the swing which was terrifyingly effective:

Harold started the swing moving back and forth, then stood on the seat. When the swing came to rest at the highest point in its arc, Harold squatted down. When the swing passed through the lowest point in its swing at its maximum speed, Harold stood up. In a few minutes Harold was soaring forward out over the decline in their property. This method is described more fully in the sidebar "Pumping a Swing."

"The baby is here!"

Ruth and Harold had four children, in order Susan, Linda, Edwin Lloyd ("Ned"), and Kevin. A photo on the cover of this pamphlet shows the extended family in the summer of 1958, just after our son Lloyd was born.

I told Helen that the one physical requirement for a wife I originally had was wide hips to ease the delivery of a baby. I had to abandon

this requirement in her case. Helen had narrow hips, which resulted in a difficult delivery of our first child, Lloyd, with birth weight over eight pounds. In contrast, sister Ruth had wide hips. When she went to the hospital, she delivered first-child Susan in half an hour, even before she got to the delivery room. A nurse raised the bed cover and shouted, "The baby is here!"

Old wives' lore is that the second baby comes with three hours' shorter labor! After her experience with Susan, Ruth was careful to come to the hospital early for her later babies.

Harold the Sentry

As Longview grew up around Ruth and Harold's plot, a junior high school was built next to their property. Naturally, junior high boys' mouths watered at Harold's apple trees and adventure beckoned. Harold, sitting hidden in the foliage, sprang into action, ran down the

thief, brought him into the house, and offered the boy a choice: "Give me your parents' number or I will call the police." A similar choice faced the parent, "Come and pick up your son or I will call the police." I was not told how efficient this athletic sentry duty turned out to be.

Deery Dollars

Ruth worked as a teacher in a junior high school. There she devised a classroom marketplace that motivated learning. She printed paper Deery Dollars and used them to pay students for demonstrated mastery of various topics specified for that grade. Mastery of different steps in long division might be examples. The students demonstrated a hunger for Deery Dollars comparable to that of their parents for US dollars.

Because students knew what they needed to do in order to earn Deery Dollars, they

PUMPING A SWING

This essay describes an efficient method to pump a swing worked out by Harold Deery using elementary Newtonian mechanics. A first-year physics class will help you to understand the following.

The swing on which Harold found his solution was a tall one, 16 to 20 feet high, located on Ruth and Harold's property in Longview, Washington. The swing moved backward over level ground, but when it moved forward it soared out over the steep drop on their property.

Harold stood on the swing's seat.

Note that Harold and the swing seat move back and forth along the tangential direction.

- Define the magnitude of the angular momentum (of Harold-plus-swing-seat) as their speed times their distance from the stationary center of rotation.
- At the highest point in the swing, with the swing instantaneously at rest, Harold squatted down.
- At the lowest point in the swing, Harold stood up.
- At this lowest point in the swing, gravity does not affect angular momentum, be-

cause the line of gravity that acts on (Harold-plus-swing-seat) goes through the stationary center of the arc.

Here is the key: As Harold stands up at the lowest point, he decreases his distance to the stationary center of the arc. In order for the magnitude of angular momentum (Harold's speed-times-distance-to-the-center) to remain constant, Harold's speed must increase. This leads to a higher point at the end of the arc when the swing next comes to rest.

SUMMARY: Harold squats down whenever the swing comes to rest at either of the two highest points in its swing. Harold stands up whenever the swing passes through the lowest point moving in either direction.

When Harold tried out his pumping method, it was terrifyingly effective: After a few pumps, he soared out over the drop in landscape in front of him.

CAUTION: There is some danger that when you or your children try out Harold's method, you will be so surprised by its effectiveness that you may lose control of the swing.

worked largely on their own. Of course, they misplaced parts of the task and then found them, leading to often repeated phrase, "Who stole my – here it is."

At the end of the semester, Ruth had the problem of soaking up accumulated student wealth in Deery Dollars. To accomplish this, she requested the help of her students' parents and others in the community. They emptied their attics and garages of discarded toys and bric-a-brac for a final Grand Deery-Dollar Auction.

As a junior-high-school student, I might not be interested in the clutter in our garage, but may be delighted with items in the clutter of your garage.

Later, Deery Dollars became Scholar Dollars. A publisher called Good Apple published her idea in an activity book in 1982.

Susan's Death

Susan Deery grew up and left home to attend Reed College, a liberal arts institution in Portland Oregon.

One day I received a letter from Ruth which was edged in black. It told of Susie's death in the Yukon territory. Susie and some Reed College friends were flown into a remote section where they camped. Five of them were caught in an avalanche which killed all but one member of the group. The injured survivor struggled back to their camp, radioed for help, and was flown out. Nothing could be done about the four others, who were under yards of snow and ice from the avalanche.

By sending news of Suzie's death in a black-edged letter, Ruth assumed that we would not hear of the catastrophe on the news, and we did not. Mother was visiting a young friend of hers near New York City. I called Mother's friend, told her to have Mother sit down, then hand the phone to her, then I told Mother the terrible news.

Harold's Savvy Decline

Harold contracted Parkinson's disease, a particularly unfair disability for someone so physically active, but he bore it stoically. He remained the master of technology. Parkinson's disease sufferers often experience hallucinations. One day when Harold was sitting alone in the

house, he saw a group of water jets shoot up just outside his window. He wondered whether their water main had sprung a leak where it entered the house. To test this, he turned on all the faucets in the kitchen and bathroom – including flushing the toilet. This should reduce the water pressure and lower the height of the water jets. The height of the jets did not change, so Harold knew they were not real, but a Parkinson's hallucination.

Symptoms increased, to which was added arthritis. Harold fell and suffered a broken hip. When he was told he would never walk again and could not go home, he lost interest in living. Ruth asked Harold if he wanted her and the doctors to take extreme measures to keep him alive. He scoffed and said no. He died on October 24, 2003 at the age of 86.

Because both Ruth and Harold had served in the armed forces, they received free gravesites for their ashes. The provided marker had a limited number of alphanumeric symbols. Ruth created for Harold the beautiful message "Mountains called him." Ruth's marker, next to his, says "Joy in spite of everything."

Ruth's Last Breath

After Harold's death Ruth continued to live a full life. For example, she travelled to Italy. On the flight home she had a heart attack, though did not realize it – thinking it was merely a sudden loss of energy. When she went to her doctor a week later, he sent her by Life Flight to Oregon Health Science University (OHSU) in Portland. She also had malignant melanoma and had not expected to live to the end of 2008. By luck, Ruth's daughter Linda and her family also lived in Portland.

I visited Ruth at OHSU. Linda's daughter Sara was on one side of her bed, I was on the other. Ruth was connected by tubes to various machines and breathed with difficulty. I decided it was time for comfort-only care, the medical supervisor agreed, and the tubes were removed.

After five or ten minutes, Ruth stopped breathing. Sara let out a cry. Outside the window next to Ruth's head, sunlight broke out from behind a cloud. It was March 3, 2008; Ruth was almost 85 years old.

HELEN

A MEMORIAL ESSAY

Helen Thompson Taylor

19 April 1933 - 14 September 2018

I met Helen Ruth Thompson in a hugging game at Oberlin College in 1952. Helen lived in Talcott Hall, a freshman women's dormitory. I was a junior and – believe it or not – a chaplain at meals in May Cottage, a nearby freshman women's dorm.

Many students went home for the brief Thanksgiving vacation, but Helen stayed in Oberlin. Talcott Hall welcomed May Cottage for a party. A game began in which one couple was invited to arrange another couple in a more intimate embrace. Then the arranging couple took the place of the arranged couple and the process repeated with a new, uninformed couple who came in from outside the room. Intimacy increased with each repetition.

Embracing Helen was a pleasant experience for me. Helen, in contrast, assumed that I was also a freshman; she was interested in dating a junior or, even better, some boy from the Oberlin Divinity School to replace the preacher father in her life.

Over the next two years our love blossomed. Helen was a piano accompanist in the Oberlin College Gilbert and Sullivan Players. Every year a member of the British D'Oyly Carte Gilbert and Sullivan Players came to Oberlin to add the final touches. One year Helen prepared her chorus so that when this British specialist opened the door the group burst into the triumphant song "For He Is an Englishman" from *HMS Pinafore*.

In 1953, in our family's used 1936 Cadillac at Chance Creek near Oberlin, I asked Helen to marry me. Helen called her parents in Syracuse and decided to say Yes.

I graduated from Oberlin College that year and went east to work on a Ph.D. in Phys-

ics at Harvard University with a scholarship provided by the William H. Danforth Foundation, which supported graduate students "who consider college teaching to be a Christian vocation."

Both Helen and I had two lonely school years before Helen graduated from Oberlin College in 1955 with a French major. That summer we were married in Syracuse, New York, at the Northern Baptist Church of Hel-

Helen Ruth Thompson and Edwin Floriman Taylor, Oberlin, Ohio, 1953.





Left to right: Esther Bliss Taylor, Helen Thompson Taylor, Edwin F. Taylor, Ruth Deery, at the wedding of Helen and Edwin.

en's father Calvin Miles Thompson Jr. Helen, now named Helen Thompson Taylor, joined me in graduate housing at Harvard University. The Danforth Foundation paid all our expenses, including those for Helen to earn a master's degree in music education at Boston University, after which she helped support us by teaching music education in the majority Armenian community of Watertown, Massachusetts.

We moved to Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, then a men's school with strong fraternities, a new experience for both of us. Soon thereafter our first child, Lloyd William Taylor II was born, named after my father who died in a mountain climbing accident in 1948.

Baby Lloyd was a star at my Harvard graduation in 1958. In 1960 Helen Crissman Taylor (now called Criss) was born, followed by Edwin Andrew Taylor (now known as Andrew) in

1964, after the family moved to Boston, where I joined the Science Teaching Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In 1962–63, during an earlier Wesleyan University Junior Faculty Sabbatical at Princeton University, I was captivated by general relativist John Archibald Wheeler's presentation of special relativity as the first subject in an introductory physics course. He and I collaborated on *Spacetime Physics*, followed by a textbook on general relativity called *Exploring Black Holes*, later revised with MIT co-author Edmund Bertschinger. This revision is now available for free download at exploringblackholes.com

Helen Thompson Taylor was an intuitive cook and a live-wire go-getter, ready to organize and take charge of any organization to which she committed herself. Both of us have been deeply proud of our three children, each of whom is now at the top of his or her profession.

FATHER'S DEATH

AUGUST 8, 1948

It was still dark on the morning of August 8, 1948, when Harold Deery roused Father and me in our campsite at the foot of Mount St. Helens in Washington State. We had to reach the top early in order to start down by 10 AM; later in the day sunlight would leave our side of the mountain, turning mushy snow fields into ice.

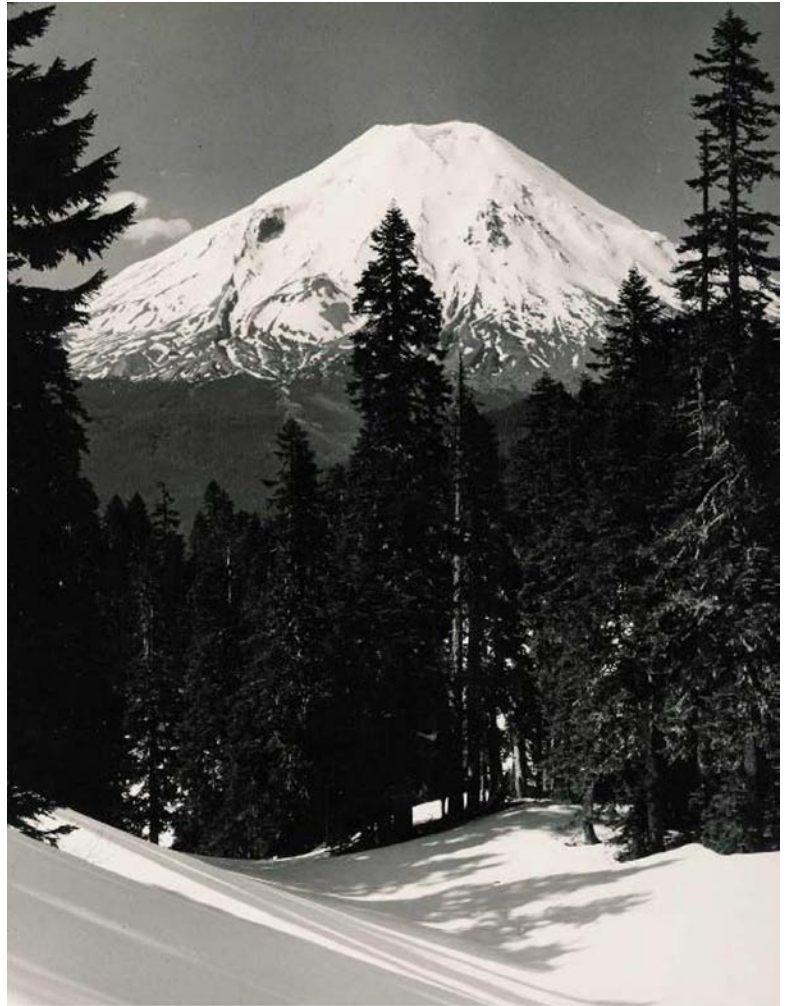
Harold Deery, my brother-in-law, 30 years old, was an enthusiastic mountain climber of long experience. Father, Lloyd W. Taylor, 55 years old, never took exercise other than walking to and from work. He had no experience of mountain climbing. I was 17 years old, had climbed the Franconia and Presidential Ranges at summer camp and had one previous experience hiking over snow.

Harold, Father, and I arrived in good time at the summit, a bowl-shaped, snow-filled caldera from the mountain's volcanic past. I was disappointed that there was no peak from which to enjoy the view in all directions.

We started down. Harold and I wore crampons: steel frames strapped to our boots, with long projecting spikes that dug into the snow. Father's borrowed hiking boots had hobnails, small metal projections around the edges. He could not add crampons, because the projecting hobnails would grind against the steel frames.

Gaping fissures interrupted the smooth snow fields. As we descended, I twice asked Harold's permission to take off my crampons and glissade, which means to slide on your shoes: to ski without skis. Both times he refused to let me.

Half an hour later, as we traversed a steep snow field, I heard a shout from above and behind me. Father glissaded past me, sliding on his shoes, and reached the edge of a fissure about 100 feet farther down the slope. He disappeared up to his shoulders, his elbows



holding on to the edge, a concentrated frown on his face, then dropped from view.

As Harold and I ran down and left to skirt the edge of the fissure, I had a fantasy: Our extended family sat around a roaring rough-stone fireplace in a hunting lodge. "Boy, I sure thought you were a gonner!" I exclaimed. Father and the others laughed in a loving and convivial manner at the unreality of my fear.

Harold and I worked the long way around and down past the edge of the fissure. It was an ice-cliff 35 feet high, at its foot a shallow depression 20 feet wide, full of hillocks. Father lay over one of these on his back.

Mount St. Helens in 1942, six years before the accident. Photo by Harold A. Deery. Much later, on 18 May 1980, it erupted catastrophically and is now a smoldering ruin of its former self.

Harold declared, "This is terrible!"

Father certainly died instantly – his death certificate says that his chest was crushed. But that possibility did not enter our heads; our urgent goal was to get help. I sat on the adjoining ice hillock and held Father's head in my lap. Harold disappeared over the lower edge of the depression on his way down the mountain to get help.

Physical and emotional numbness – combined with denial – anesthetized me as I sat for hours on the ice hillock with Father's head in my lap.

As dusk began to settle, I heard shouts, to which I responded. A group of men appeared over the downhill edge of the depression where Harold had earlier departed.

The man in charge pressed two fingers against Father's neck.

"Deader 'n Hell. Was he a friend of yours?"

"He was my father."

"Sorry kid, I didn't know he was your father."

I was cramped and cold, so they put me, shoes and all, into a sleeping bag for a while. They said it would be difficult to bring Father's body down with night falling.

We descended. Night came.

As we neared the parking lot, I told the group to stay back and alone approached the car where Mother sat in front. Harold exhausted in the back seat, sat up as I arrived.

"Mother, Father is dead."

Mother threw her head back and gasped, putting a handkerchief to her mouth. Then she moved over so I could sit beside her. She quickly agreed that our decision to leave Father's body on the mountain overnight was correct. (It was brought down in the next day or two.)

I rode alone in the waiting ambulance, sitting next to the driver in front. As we started, he turned on the flashing lights, "so nobody will bother us." The siren remained silent, and we drove at legal speeds. For the remainder of the trip we did not speak.

The ambulance took me "for observation" to the hospital in Kelso, Washington, where Harold lived with my sister Ruth. Evidently, I had no physical injuries. Over my mild protest that I was sufficiently exhausted to sleep, the doctor gave me a whopping big sleeping pill.

This essay originally appeared in the pamphlet *Pool Stories*, 2017.

OUR 1936 CADILLAC

A LOVABLE, LUXURIOUS OLD WRECK

In 1948 our family decided to visit Ruth and Harold in Kelso, Washington, across the Columbia River from Longview where they later built a house. On the way we would visit National Parks, which required a car. We did not own a car; father walked to work and I bicycled to school.

The year 1948 was so soon after the end of the Second World War that few new cars were available, and those were very expensive. Father bought a used 12-year-old 1936, 8-cylinder Cadillac and had a local car mechanic rebuild the engine. (In 1936, Cadillac also made 12-cylinder and 16-cylinder versions – in the middle of the Great Depression!) We covered more than 5000 miles visiting national parks as we drove west.

That summer I turned 17 and was old enough to help father with the driving.

The year 1948 was before President Eisenhower built superhighways that later spanned the United States. The highways we drove had one lane in each direction, which made for slow driving and the frequent need to pass. Father exclaimed, "These 40-mile-an-hour-birds sure slow things down!"

After we left Chicago, we camped out in commercial and national park campgrounds including the Badlands in South Dakota, Yellowstone in Wyoming, Bryce Canyon in Utah, the Grand Canyon in Arizona and so on up the west coast.

In Yellowstone Park, father checked the price of a room in the central hotel. It was \$45 a night, equivalent to \$550 in 2022. We continued to camp out.

As we wound through the mountain roads of the west, mother remarked that a driver's temporary mental seizure might plunge us all over the nearest roadside cliff.

Finally, we arrived at Ruth and Harold's rented cabin in Star Auto Park. During these thousands of miles, the Cadillac did not receive routine lubrications because father had not heard of them. He had not owned a car



Stock photo of a 1936 Cadillac, 60 series.

for decades and was correspondingly uninformed about routine "lube jobs." The unlubricated Cadillac creaked and squeaked as we approached Star Auto Park. Harold probably convinced father to get a lube job, but the damage was already done. Necessary repairs complicated our later drive back to Oberlin.

This later eastward trip across the United States was a sad one because of father's death August 8 on the slopes of Mount St. Helens. Lucky for us the Kinsey family from Oberlin had spent the summer in Eugene, Oregon, and were headed home, so we drove together.

Dan, father of the warm-hearted Kinsey family, was the coach of the Oberlin College's

track team. He had won the 110-meter hurdles in the 1924 summer Olympics and directed our Boy Scout troop. His older son David was one of my best friends (you can see a photo of David, as well as his father's Oldsmobile, on page 15 of this document).

Soon the two-car caravan segregated: all the adults in Kinsey's grey Oldsmobile and all the children in our black Cadillac where Dave and I shared the driving. It was lovingly convivial as we drove along sharing jokes and family stories.

Dan Kinsey was as relaxed as my mother was anxious about keeping the two cars together. Soon we were hopelessly separated. We children stopped at a highway patrol station and laughingly reported that our parents were lost. The police communication system soon brought us together again.

The only delay on our eastward trip was a mechanical one, due to father's earlier lack of lubrication of our Cadillac. We had to stop while the front-end suspension system was rebuilt.

In Casper, Wyoming, we visited Uncle Edwin and his wife Lillian. After observing our family, Uncle Edwin took his sister Esther aside and cautioned her that she placed too great a burden on me, asking my advice about

substantive matters that I was too young to handle. From then on mother shouldered the adult decisions alone.

After returning to Oberlin, we kept the 1936 Cadillac for a while, returning its maintenance to the mechanic who had rebuilt the engine. He told me, at this late date, that the Oberlin Conservatory professor who sold the car to father was in the habit of simply running the car until it no longer operated before bringing it in for service.

I had another year of high school before entering Oberlin College and used the car for dates. Often, I took my current girlfriend a dozen miles out of town to Chance Creek, an undeveloped scenic property owned by the college. My family's Puritan heritage kicked in: we kissed in the front seat but did not adjourn to the back seat after a kiss or two.

Probably the last time I drove a girl to Chance Creek was in 1953 when I asked Helen Ruth Thompson to marry me. The rest of that story is history.

By the time we tried to sell our old Cadillac, new cars were plentiful and the used car market had collapsed. We finally sold it for one percent of the money our family had sunk into this lovable, luxurious old wreck.

BACK COVER PHOTO: Taylor-Heingartner Families
ca. Summer 1969, Oberlin, Ohio

Behind the Camera

- Alex Heingartner, born 11/21/1930, age 38

Back Row, Left to Right

- Ruth Taylor Deery, born 4/23/1923, age 46
- Edwin Taylor, born 6/22/1931, age 38
- Ellie Heingartner, born 1/7/31, age 38
- Helen Thompson Taylor, born 4/19/1933, age 36
- Lloyd Taylor, born 5/3/1958, age 11

Middle Row, Left to Right

- Esther Bliss Taylor, born 10/25/1890, age 78
- Bill Heingartner, born 1/8/1969, age 6 months
- Nancy Heingartner, born 11/5/65, age 4
- Gordy Heingartner, born 4/10/62, age 7
- Bob Heingartner, born 10/15/59, age 10

Front Row, Left to Right

- E. Andrew Taylor, born 10/15/1964, age 4
- H. Crissman Taylor, born 11/28/1960, age 8



